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IC 75-2555

21 October 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community

SUBJECT: A Proposal Concerning the Crisis Management Problem

1. There is, as you well know, a real and growing apprehension that the DCI's role in crisis management is--or soon will be--declining, principally as a consequence of diverse activities under way in the Department of Defense. The question of the moment seems to be precisely how the DCI might best stake out an appropriate claim in this area (or, if you prefer, protect a claim that was staked out long ago). The DCI himself, in response to your memo of 17 September, asserted that "the real key is to focus crisis management on NSC and WSAG and hang the intelligence onto those groups." He suggested that, in view of such problems as "ops secrecy" and the "verticalization" of intelligence, a WSAG Working Group consisting of representatives from both the intelligence and operational communities be created to "staff" WSAG and provide it with integrated information.*

2. Others have made similar proposals. In November 1974, PFD officers and others involved in the NSDM 242 exercise recommended that a single Interagency Support Group be established to advise and support WSAG in the field of nuclear planning. In June of this year, the Chairman of CIA's Intradirectorate Committee on Internal Organization for Crisis Management stated in his memo to the Management Committee that there was merit in a proposal that a WSAG Support Group be formed to coordinate substantive support of policy makers during crises. The Chief of the CIA Operations Center, in both his memo to the DCI of 5 August--in which he called attention to trends in DOD which fail to recognize DCI crisis equities--and his memo to you of 23 September, suggests that

* The DCI is concerned that, as a consequence of "ops secrecy," important information concerning US moves during a crisis does not reach senior intelligence officials and analysts in time to inform ongoing reporting and analysis. He is also concerned that, as the demands of a crisis increase, independent elements of the Intelligence Community and of the Government emphasize "vertical reporting"--i.e. reporting upwards through separate chains of command--rather than the lateral passage of information. Both of these concerns were described and discussed at the DCI's behest, in our post-mortem report on the Mayaguez incident (pp 14-15) of August 1975.


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perhaps the now moribund NSDM 242 exercise should be reopened so that the idea of creating some sort of crisis operations/intelligence structure could be pushed anew. And your own memo to the DCI of 17 September refers to NSDM 242 and notes that the Government's crisis management machinery is a "fit topic for NSC consideration."

3. Thus, in addition to our common anxiety about general trends in crisis management, we now may be moving toward an agreement in re four specific propositions: (a) that an intragovernmental task force should be established to obtain and funnel information and intelligence to senior policy makers during crises; (b) that such a task force should somehow be attached to WSAG or the NSC (depending on which organization is treating the crisis at hand); (c) that the task force should be chaired by a representative of the DCI; and (d) that, in order to provide the DCI and this task force with an appropriate charter, the NSC itself should in some way sanction the entire arrangement.

4. One way to proceed would be to propose a new NSDM which would concern itself with the information and intelligence aspects of crisis management in general rather than, as is the case with NSDM 242, in specific (nuclear) terms. And perhaps it would be possible for the DCI to propose just such a NSDM via a memorandum to the President, with a suggested draft of the NSDM itself attached. In addition to providing a broad rationale for such a proposal, a memorandum of this character could cite past experiences (e.g., the Bay of Pigs incident) to support a call for improvements in existing machinery and consider (at least in passing) the implications of DIA's plans for a Centralized Collection Facility.

5. This might be a bad time to try to move forward with such a proposal. And it may be that the idea of a NSDM sponsored by the DCI would appear radical to some (e.g., in the Pentagon) or irrelevant to others (e.g., in the Department of State). But if we decide to press this issue at all, I think we (the IC Staff) should come up with a fairly tangible proposal. And there is at least a chance that we could in this way try to achieve all our principal objectives: stimulate the DCI's concern, capture the interest of the NSC, reinforce the crisis role of the DCI, and ultimately ensure policy control over departmental crisis management systems.


Chief, Product Review Division

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